



Department of Justice

United States Attorney Rodger A. Heaton
Central District of Illinois

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
THURSDAY, JUNE 14, 2007
www.usdoj.gov/usao/ilc/

CONTACT: SHARON PAUL
PHONE: (217) 492-4450

TEXAS MAN SENTENCED TO SIX YEARS IN PRISON

FOR RECEIVING CHILD PORNOGRAPHY

Defendant Met Illinois Minor Playing On-line Game

ROCK ISLAND, IL - A Texas man was sentenced to prison today for receiving child pornography from an Illinois girl he met while playing the on-line game "Everquest." United States District Judge Michael M. Mihm sentenced John Wayne Malone, age 41, of Pittsburgh, Texas, to 72 months in federal prison, as announced by Rodger A. Heaton, U.S. Attorney for the Central District of Illinois. Malone was also ordered to a life term of mandatory supervised release following his term of imprisonment. Malone was ordered to report to the federal Bureau of Prisons on July 16, 2007.

In February 2007, during court proceedings and in court documents, Malone admitted that during the summer of 2004, he began Internet chats with a young female through Instant Messaging (IM) communications via the on-line game Everquest. In October 2004, the girl related that she was 14 years old; however, Malone continued to engage in on-line chats and communications by e-mail and telephone and the two played the on-line game regularly. By June 2005, the chats were of a graphic, sexual nature and Malone requested the teen send him sexual images. In early July 2005, Malone received several sexually explicit photographs sent via cell phone by the teen to Malone's e-mail address.

U.S. Attorney Heaton stated, "Technology provides child predators with more sophisticated and sinister methods, but the objective remains unchanged: to lure innocent children and exploit their vulnerability. This case underscores again that there are predators who will go wherever children are to pursue them. Law enforcement and parents must remain vigilant to protect our children, whether on the playground or on the Internet."

The case was investigated by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service; the Moline, Illinois Police Department; and, the Pittsburgh, Texas Police Department, and prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Matthew J. Cannon, in the Rock Island Division of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Central District of Illinois.

The case was brought as part of Project Safe Childhood. In February 2006, Attorney General Alberto R. Gonzales launched Project Safe Childhood, a nationwide initiative designed to protect children from online exploitation and abuse. Led by the United States Attorneys, Project Safe Childhood marshals federal, state and local resources to better locate, apprehend and prosecute individuals who exploit children via the Internet as well as identify and rescue victims. For more information about Project Safe Childhood, please visit www.projectsafechildhood.gov.